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## Proposed Talking Points for DCI at NSC/NSPG Meeting, 27 March 1984

1. As always, the Soviets are acting in arms control in five areas of increasing political sensitivity:
  - o public statements, as in TASS, et al.
  - o unofficial bilateral exchanges of views, as in Dartmouth Group, et al.
  - o official exchanges, as in MBFR, CDE, SCC, etc.
  - o private or semi-private feelers, as in Dobrynin's "leaks" to Boston Globe, et al.
  - o official letters between President Reagan and General Secretary Chernenko.
2. There is not, and probably cannot be, substantive consistency in all five channels from day-to-day or even week-to-week. It is too hard to orchestrate all that.
3. The mix of "positive" and "negative" channels varies over time; in some cases, as today, public statements and official letters are congruent in substance.
4. In fact, I think it is clear the Soviets are purposely "talking out of both sides of their mouths."
5. The key question is whether any meaning is there for the US.
6. The USSR clearly is looking for US "concessions", such as taking UK and French nuclear missiles into account somewhere. Such steps by US would:
  - o look good in their own right to USSR.
  - o let the USSR out of the political box they created when they left INF and START.
  - o be useful for any internal arguments in USSR that this leadership knows how to deal with the US.

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7. In any case, the Soviets will be tough bargainers in normal diplomatic channels or private ones. 1984 will complicate in obvious ways any US or USSR efforts to:
  - o identify areas of mutual interest for any progress.
  - o actually work it out.
8. The Soviets appear to have adopted a two-pronged strategy on arms control, taking an inflexible line on INF and START, while simultaneously expressing willingness, and signaling that a breakthrough in US-Soviet relations is possible if Washington shows flexibility in these other areas.
9. They presumably calculate that this strategy enables them to stand firm on the central issues of INF and START, without making themselves appear so intransigent as to rally support for NATO's policies or to demonstrate that they, not the Administration, are responsible for poor US-Soviet relations.
10. Meanwhile, they continue to probe for flexibility on a range of issues, with the aim of extracting the maximum price for any marked improvement in relations or arms control issues before the US elections.
11. The Politburo will be wary of any major steps unless convinced that significant gains are at hand for the USSR, especially on their fundamental concerns in START and INF.